

# **Grenada – Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)**

## **Introduction**

Tobacco use is one of the main preventable causes of death resulting from chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCD) in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco accounts for about four (4) million deaths each year. This figure is expected to increase to 8.4 million deaths a year by 2020 with 70% in developing countries (1).

## **Efforts to address tobacco use**

Initiation of tobacco use, in general, occurs before 18 years of age. However, information on tobacco prevention and control in young people is not readily available. As a result of this worldwide dearth of information, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) started the development of a Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) in 1998. The GYTS is a global surveillance project of tobacco use among young people in such a way that would allow for cross-country comparisons. The project, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), uses a common methodology and protocol for collecting data on tobacco use among young people aged 13 to 15 across all countries. GYTS was intended to enhance the capacity of countries to monitor tobacco use among youth, and to guide the implementation and evaluation of tobacco prevention and control programmes and policies. Grenada agreed to participate in this global survey.

## **Tobacco use in Grenada**

Non-communicable diseases, such as cancer and cardiovascular disease are the leading cause of death in Grenada. Tobacco use causes more than one-third of all deaths from cancer and heart disease in Latin America and the Caribbean (PAHO, unpublished data, 2001). In Grenada it is difficult to determine the impact of tobacco since there is no existing data on the prevalence of tobacco use in the adult population. Some information on the apparent per capita consumption among persons 15 years and older between 1984 and 1988 seems to indicate little change with consumption moving from 450 to 495 cigarettes per year. Also the morbidity or mortality

attributed to tobacco is not known. One should note, however, that chronic non-communicable diseases, such as cancer and cardiovascular disease are the leading cause of death in Grenada and those deaths due to cancers are increasing. Age at initiation of smoking is an important risk factor in developing cancer. The younger a person is when he or she starts smoking, the greater the risk of developing lung cancer. Risk of lung cancer increases approximately in proportion to the duration of smoking and the amount of tar in cigarettes (3).

## **Objectives**

The objective of this survey is:

- To document and monitor prevalence of tobacco use including cigarettes smoking, and current use of smokeless tobacco, cigars or pipes.
- To better understand and assess students' attitude, knowledge and behaviour related to tobacco use and its health impact, including: cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), media and advertising, minors access and school curriculum.

The GYTS will attempt to address the following issues:

- Determine the level of tobacco use
- Estimate age of initiation of cigarette use
- Estimate levels of susceptibility to become cigarette smokers
- Exposure to tobacco advertising
- Attitude and beliefs regarding tobacco use
- The existence of prevention programmes in schools and students' opinion regarding such interventions.